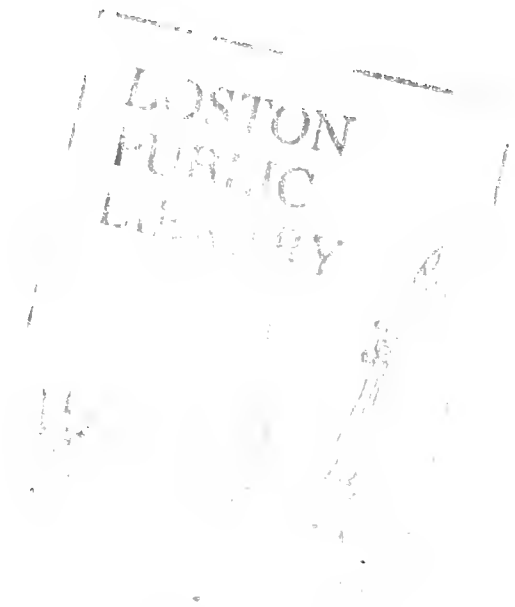


# planning department

BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY



LENA PARK STUDY

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# LENA PARK STUDY

AUGUST, 1970

**Boston Redevelopment Authority**  
**Planning Department**  
**DORCHESTER District Planning Program**





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## I. INTRODUCTION

A serious need for an increase in the supply of housing now exists in the metropolitan area. The demand for this new housing, however, seems to be focused within the City of Boston, where available vacant land is at a premium.

To facilitate the construction of new housing in Boston that can meet the needs of low income families as well as middle and upper income consumers, the Boston Redevelopment Authority has established a "New Neighborhoods" program. Studies have been undertaken of a wide variety of vacant and underutilized parcels throughout the City to determine the feasibility of building housing on them. Included in the studies have been evaluations of potential uses other than housing, particularly new public facilities that may be needed in the local neighborhood.

The Lena Park site is one of six in the City to be selected as having the greatest potential for constructing new housing. This report is an examination of that potential.

The Lena Park site is located in the Franklin Field section of Dorchester and is bounded by Franklin Park, the Boston State Hospital, Harvard Street and the Franklin Hill Avenue

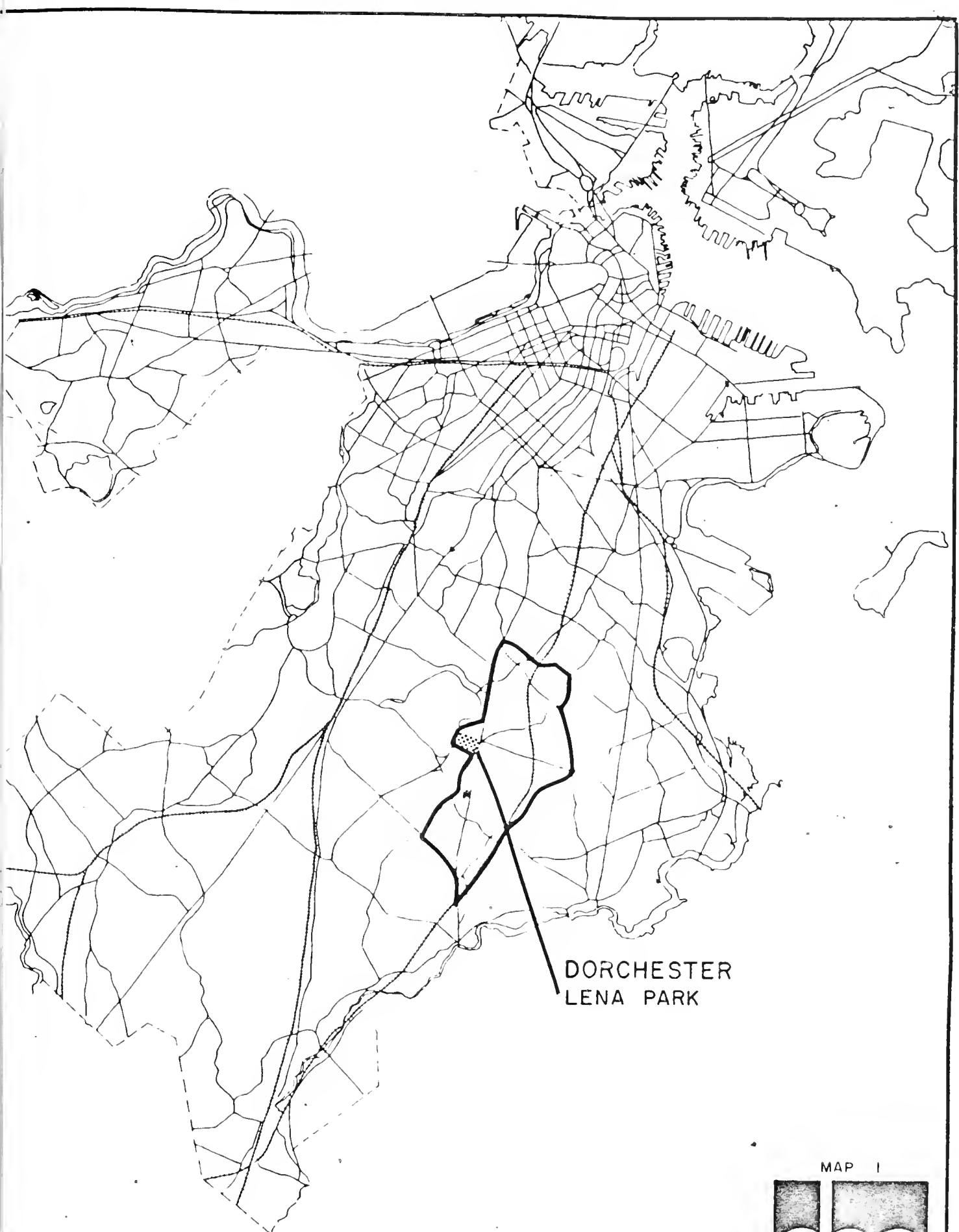


housing project (See Map 1). It consists of 11.5 acres, most of which is either vacant or contains housing blighted by age and neglect. At present, the Lena Park Housing Development Corporation, a community based non-profit group, is working closely with BRA staff in formulating plans for developing the site.

This report sets forth a proposal for developing the Lena Park site which provides for a low- and middle-income housing development consisting of more than 300 units and a neighborhood multi-service center.

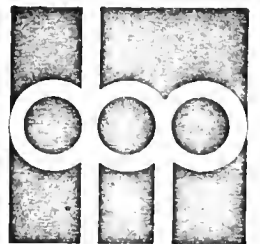
The following sections include an examination of the neighborhood surrounding the site; an analysis of the site itself; and a proposal for development of the site in keeping with the needs and expressed desires of the Lena Park Community.





DORCHESTER  
LENA PARK

MAP 1



DISTRICT PLANNING PROGRAM  
BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY



## II. DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AREA

### A. Location

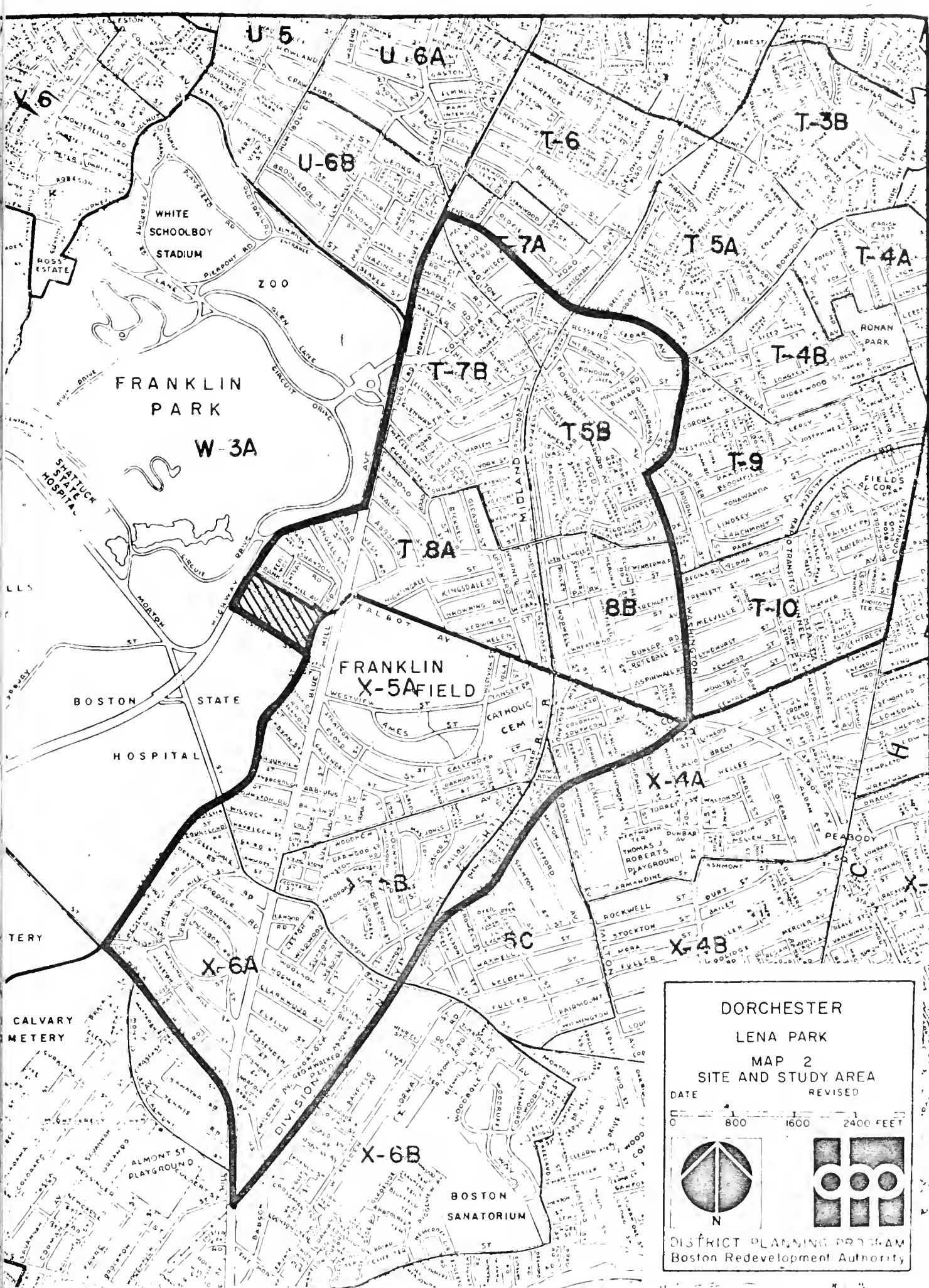
The Study Area surrounding the Lena Park site includes portions of Model Cities sub-areas 5 and 6 as well as portions of the Mt. Bowdoin, Codman, Franklin Field and Mattapan sections of Dorchester (See Map 2). The area is predominantly an older residential section with a considerable amount of public open space in its western sector. Generalized land use for the area is shown on Map 3.

### B. Population

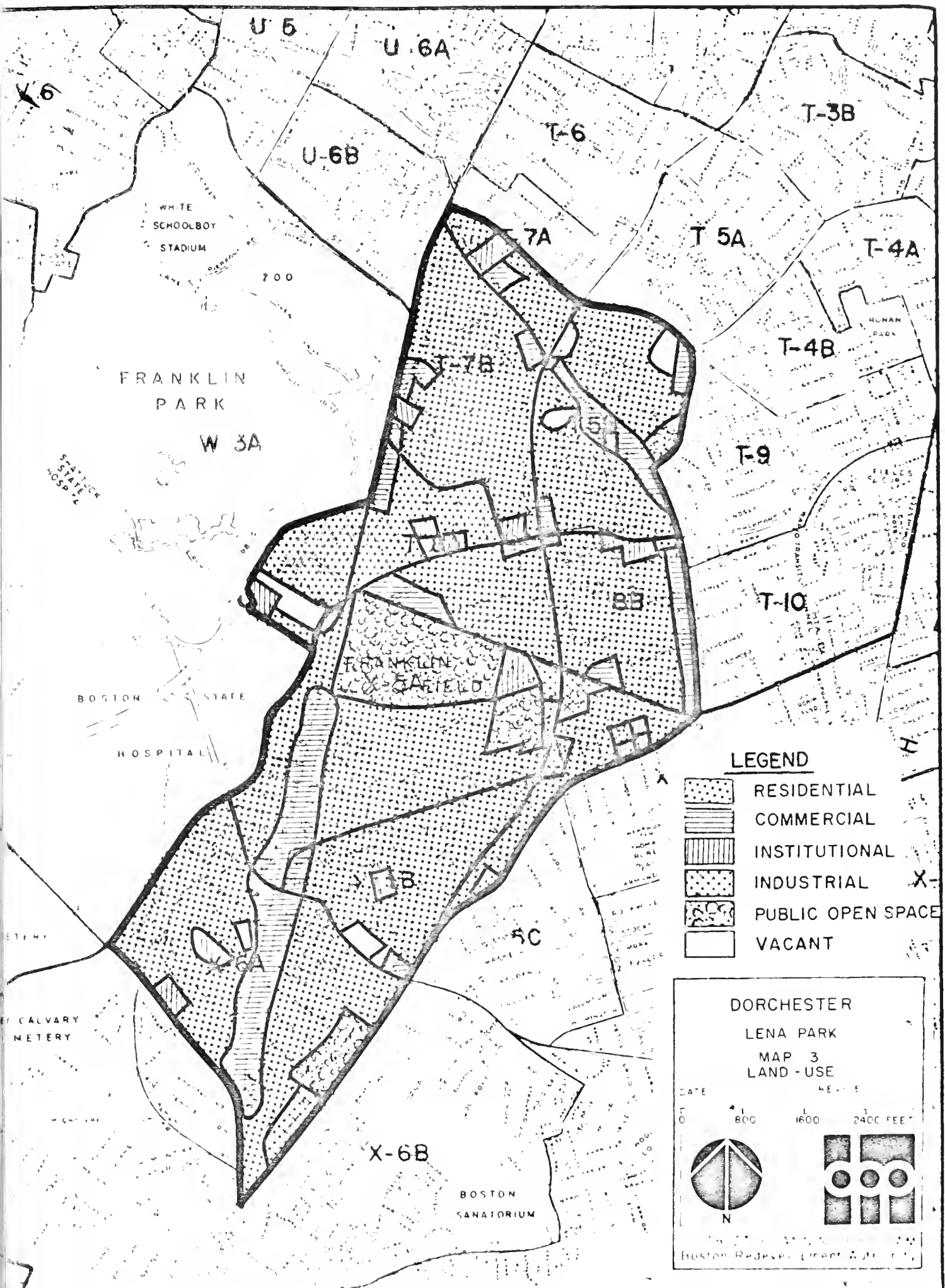
During the past 20 years, the area has experienced major population shifts. Between 1950 and 1960, the number of inhabitants dropped from 50,000 to about 45,000. Indications are that since 1960 this trend has been reversed and the population has significantly increased. Changes also appear to have been taking place in the ethnic composition of the Study Area. The non-white population has increased measurably during the past decade while the white population (predominantly Jewish) appears to have decreased. Indications are that













a large portion of the area's newcomers consists of large low income families. Of the white population remaining in the area, a significant percentage are elderly.

C. Housing Stock and Conditions

Physical deterioration in northern portions of the Study Area began in the late 1950's and has increased during the 1960's. Perhaps mainly because of uncertainties generated by rapid population shifts and the decline of Blue Hill Avenue as a major commercial street, banks have been reluctant to make loans to homeowners in the area. Similarly, homeowners have refrained from making routine repairs to their properties. Many have sold their homes and have moved away. Housing deterioration has spread rapidly and is far more extensive today than it was even a few years ago. In a block by block survey of the area conducted in 1969, serious housing decay was found in approximately one-half of the blocks in the Study Area (See Map 4). The U.S. Census had classified only 11% of the dwellings as being in deteriorated or dilapidated condition in 1960. (See Table 1)

D. Commerce and Industry

Shopping facilities in the Study Area are located along major streets such as Talbot Avenue, Blue Hill



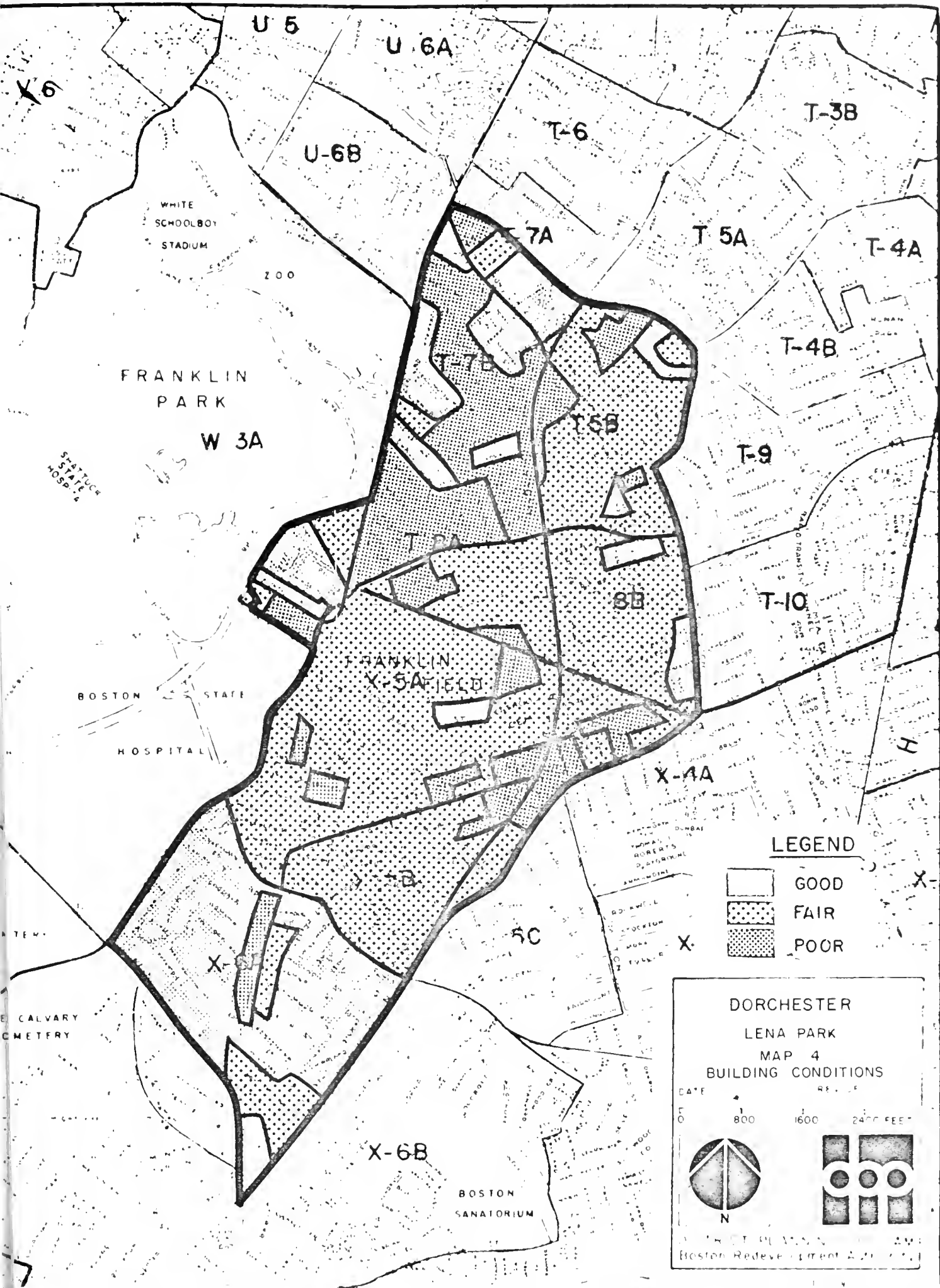






TABLE 1: HOUSING CONDITIONS, 1960

TRACT	TOTAL	DETERIORATING OR DILAPIDATED UNITS	
		NUMBER	PERCENT
HOUSING UNITS			
Complete Tracts			
T-5B	1495	234	15
T-7B	2145	420	19
T-8A	2610	124	5
T-8B	1229	39	3
X-5A	2396	231	9
X5-B	1316	263	20
Partial Tracts			
T-7A	938	222	23
X-4A	2229	50	2
X-6A	2947	330	11
X-5C	1419	294	20
TOTAL - STUDY AREA			
	18,724	2237	11%
TOTAL - CITY OF BOSTON			
	238,547	49,672	20%

SOURCE: 1960 U. S. Census



Avenue and Morton Street. Blue Hill Avenue is characterized by one-story strip commercial buildings, many of which are either boarded up or have deteriorated beyond repair. The number of commercial vacancies has increased because many small merchants, who had traditionally catered to the needs of the Jewish population, have gone out of business or have moved their businesses elsewhere. In addition, merchants have been reluctant to rehabilitate existing shops or to open new ones along Blue Hill Avenue fearing vandalism and further outbreaks of civil disturbances such as those that occurred in the general area several years ago.

Light industrial buildings are sparsely distributed throughout the area. Most of the firms are located along such major streets as Blue Hill Avenue and Morton Street.

E. Schools (See Table 2)

Elementary and junior high schools in Mattapan for the most part are old and located on small sites (See Map 5). In recent years they have experienced large increases in non-white enrollment. As a consequence, these schools are all racially imbalanced and, for the most part, are all overcrowded. The new 1,000-pupil



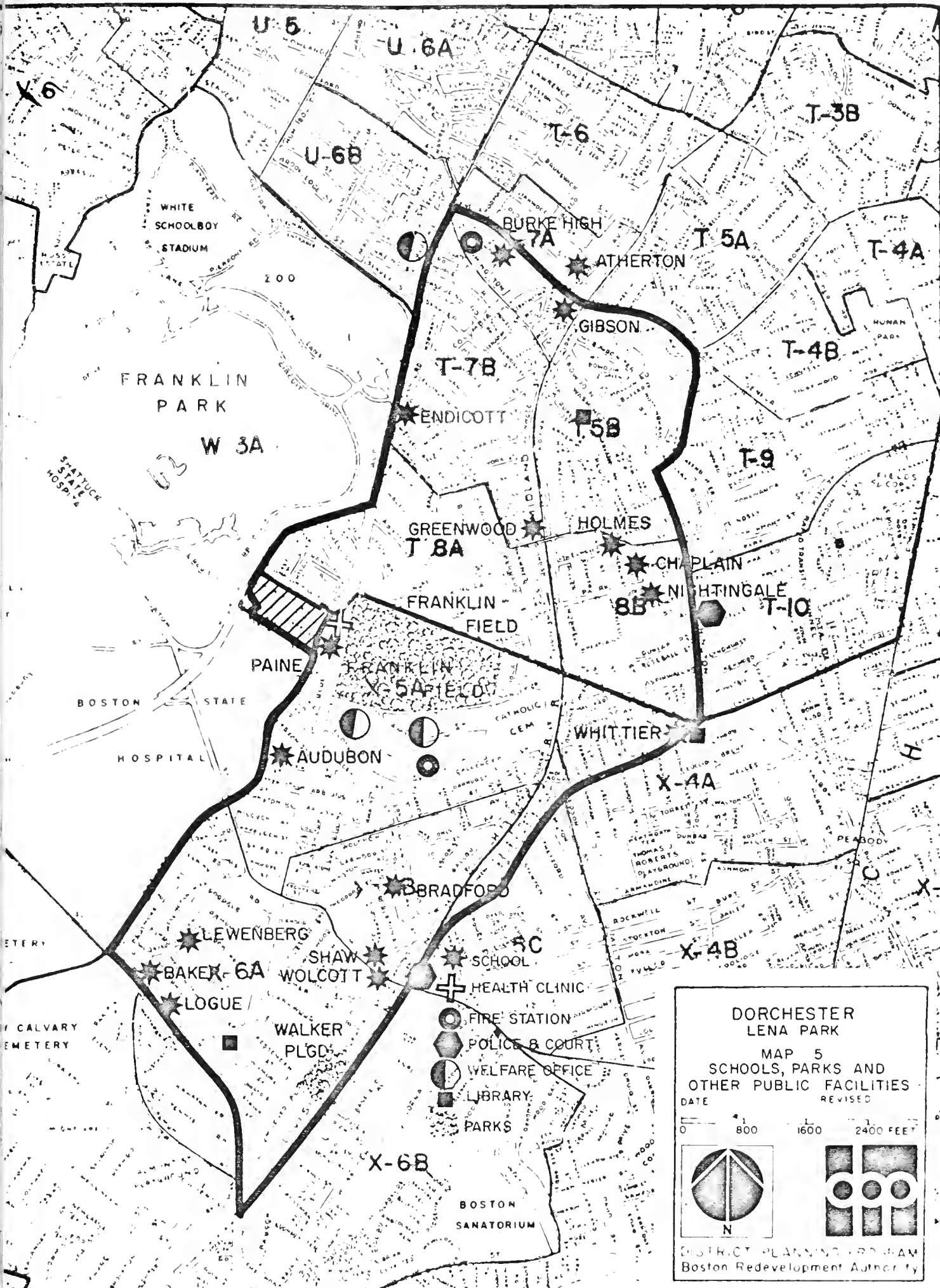
TABLE 2: SELECTED SCHOOL STATISTICS

TRACT	SCHOOL	GRADES	YR. BUILT	CAPACITY	FALL 1969 ENROLLMENT		
					TOTAL	NON-WHITE	PERCENT NON-WHITE
X-5A	Paine	K-6	1925	430	542	485	89.5%
	Greenwood	K-6	1957	630	879	860	97.8%
X-6A	Wolcott	K-6	1901	330	495	387	78.2%
X-5A	Audubon	K-6	1919	250	367	347	94.6%
T-8B	Champlain	K-3	1925 1930	300	436	388	89%
X-5A	Lewenberg	7-9	1957	1,000	766	648	84.6%

SOURCES: Sargeant Report on Boston Schools, 1962

Boston School Census, October, 1969







**DORCHESTER  
LENA PARK**

**MAP 5  
SCHOOLS, PARKS AND  
OTHER PUBLIC FACILITIES**

DATE \_\_\_\_\_ REVISED \_\_\_\_\_

0 800 1600 2400 FEET

DISTRICT PLANNING PROGRAM  
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Joseph Lee Elementary School, presently under construction on a site adjacent to Franklin Field, should help to alleviate the overcrowding somewhat. The Paine School, which directly serves the area surrounding the proposed development site, has a present enrollment of 542 with a capacity of only 430. However, the City is presently arranging to lease the "P" Building at Boston State Hospital as an annex to the Paine School. This structure is expected to add more than 200 seats to the capacity of the Paine.

F. Parks (See Map 5)

Lena Park is well served by public open space facilities including Franklin Field (45 acres), Walker Playground (6 acres), Almont Street Playground (18 acres) and Franklin Park (407 acres). These parks provide a variety of recreation facilities, including playfields, tennis and basketball courts, an ice skating rink, tot lots and sitting areas. The BRA has recently been working with the Boston Parks and Recreation Department in the preparation of master plans to enhance recreation facilities at both Franklin Park and Franklin Field.

G. Health and Social Services

As a supplement to current activities at Boston State Hospital and the recently remodeled Harvard Health

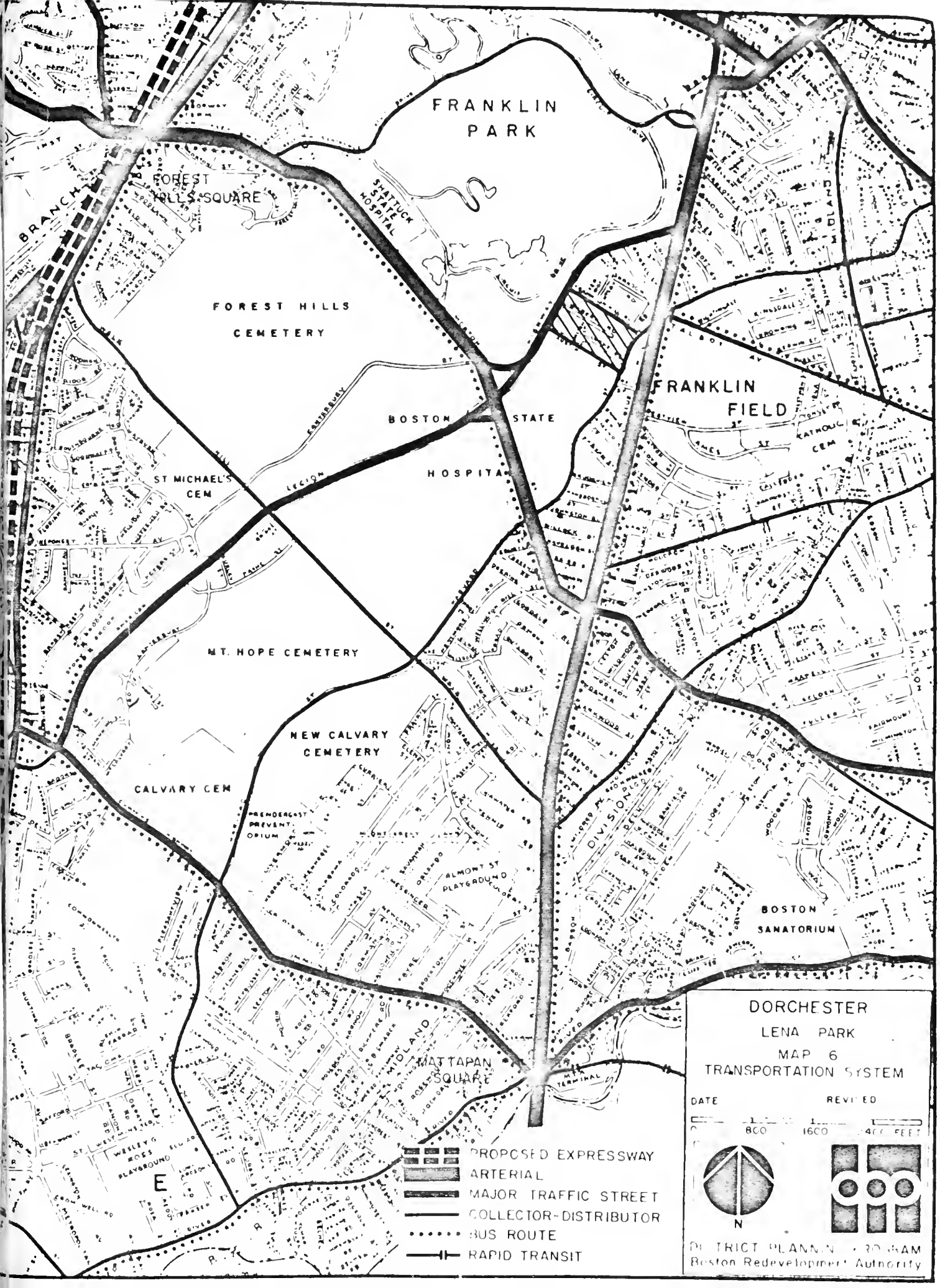


Unit, the Lena Park Housing Development Corporation has recently received approval from the federal government for a 703 Neighborhood Facilities Grant for a neighborhood multi-service center to serve the area. The facility (to be known as the Lena Park Community Center) will be located in the building presently occupied by the YMHA Hecht House and will provide a variety of services and programs directed to the health, welfare and recreation needs of the community.

#### H. Transportation

The Study Area is served by the following arterial and collector streets: Blue Hill Avenue, Talbot Avenue, Morton Street, Columbia Road and American Legion Highway (See Map 6). Buses serving the Lena Park Neighborhood are frequent and convenient to rapid transit connections to Downtown Boston at Egleston, Dudley, and Ashmont stations.





FRANKLIN  
PARK

FOREST  
HILLS SQUARE

FOREST HILLS  
CEMETERY

BOSTON STATE

HOSPITAL

FRANKLIN  
FIELD

ST MICHAEL'S  
CEM

MT. HOPE CEMETERY

NEW CALVARY  
CEMETERY

CALVARY CEM

BOSTON  
SANATORIUM

MATTAPAN  
SQUARE

DORCHESTER

LENA PARK

MAP 6  
TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

DATE REVISED

800 1600 2400 FEET



- PROPOSED EXPRESSWAY
- ARTERIAL
- MAJOR TRAFFIC STREET
- COLLECTOR-DISTRIBUTOR
- BUS ROUTE
- RAPID TRANSIT

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### III. DESCRIPTION OF THE LENA PARK SITE

#### A. Size

The Lena Park Site is approximately 11.5 acres in size of which some 4 acres are vacant and available for development immediately. Approximately 4 additional acres contain buildings which appear to be deteriorated beyond the point where they can be rehabilitated economically. The remaining 3.5 acres contain the new Lena Park Community Center and a new 14 story 97 unit apartment tower now being constructed by the Lena Park Housing Development Corporation.

#### B. Location

The site is located in the Franklin Field section of Dorchester and is bounded by Franklin Park, the Boston State Hospital, Harvard Street and the Franklin Hill Avenue housing project (See Map 7).

#### C. Topography

The terrain of the Lena Park tract slopes slightly from west to east. The site is bounded by open spaces on the west, south and east affording pleasant views in these directions. Although no boring data is available for most of the area, preliminary engineering reports indicate that the topography will not restrict future development of the site.





DORCHESTER  
LENA PARK

MAP 7  
SITE LOCATION

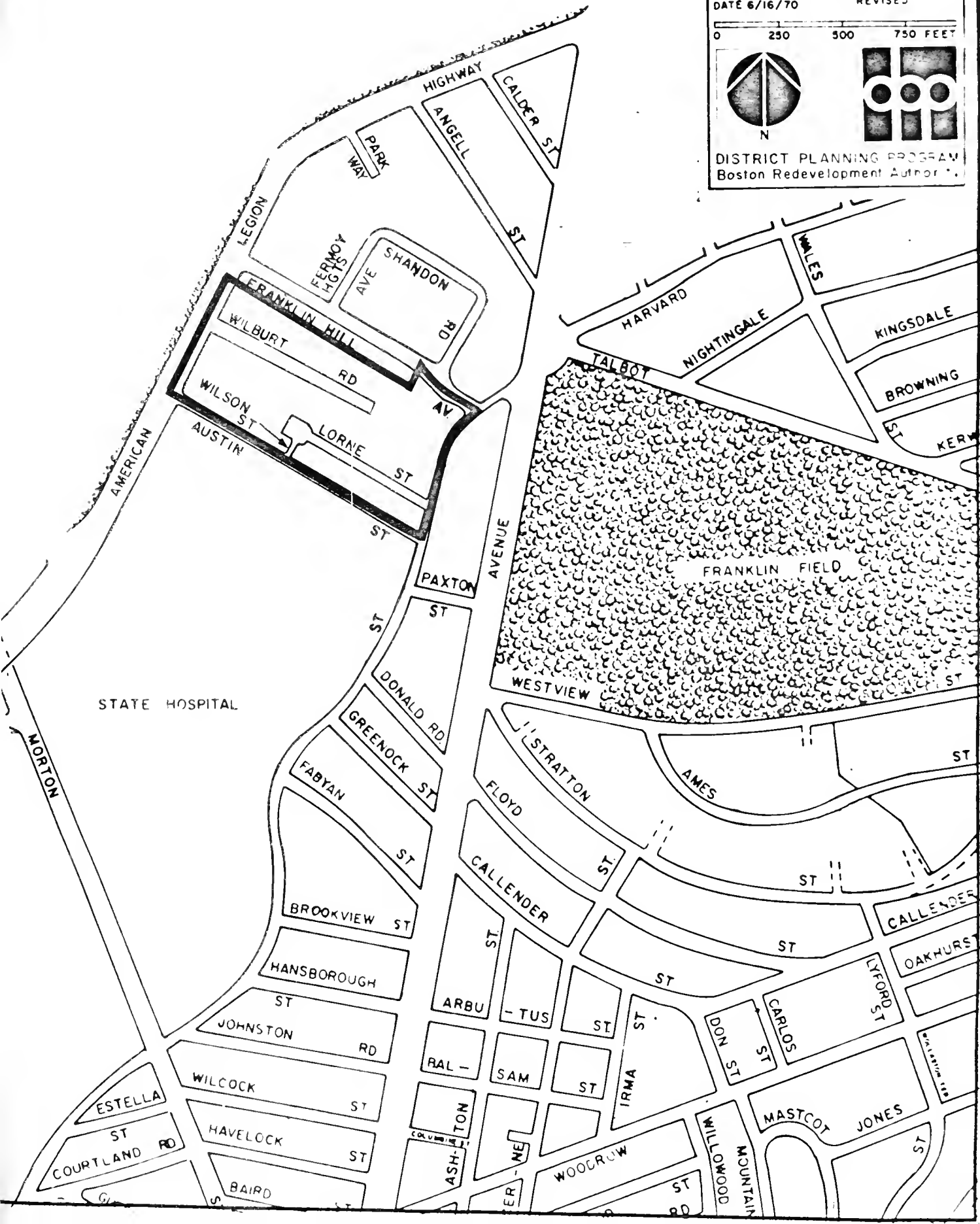
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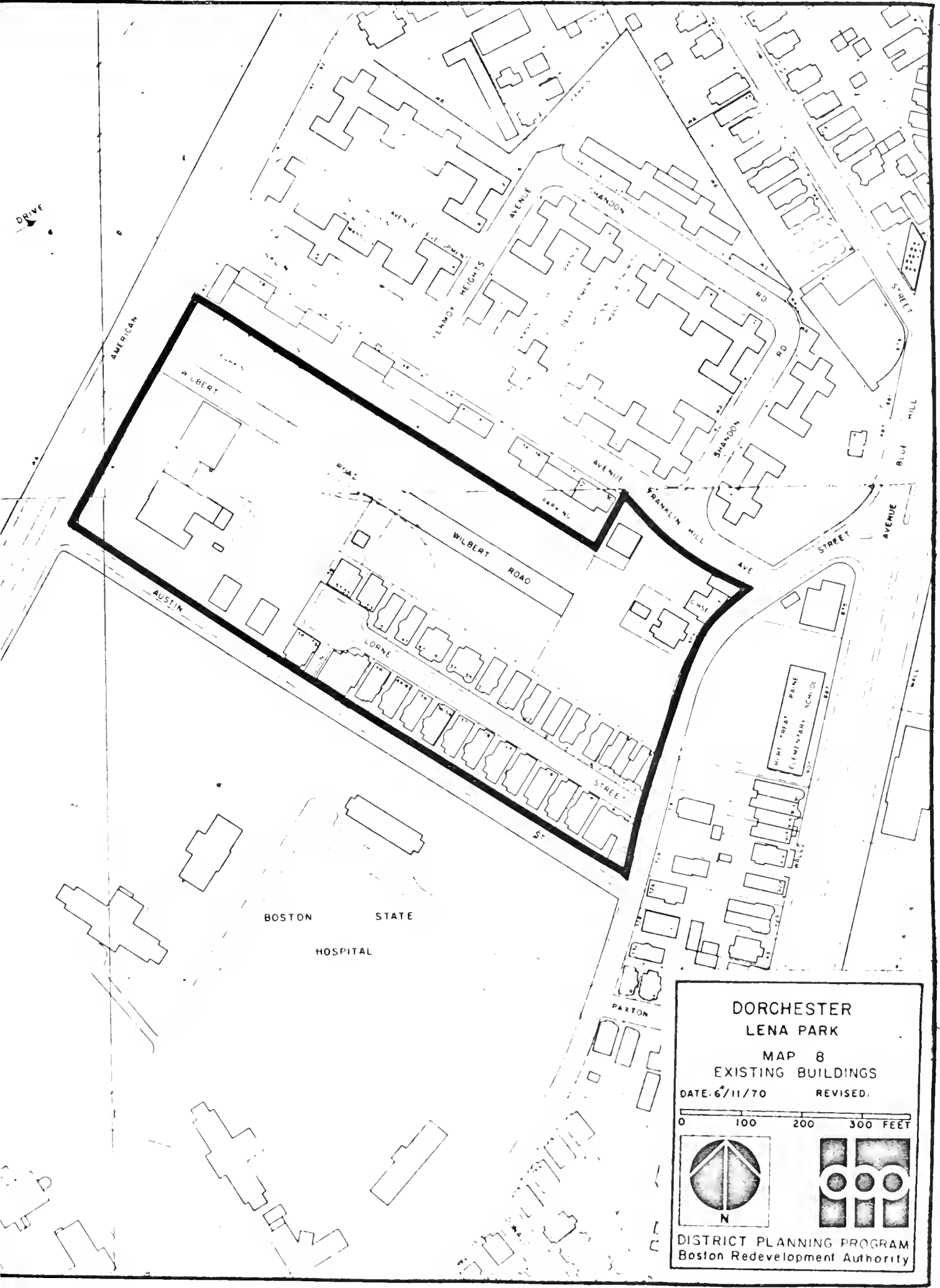
D. Existing Buildings (See Map 8)

A total of 26 buildings presently stand on the Lena Park site. Except for the Community Center, all are residential containing some 94 dwelling units only 58 of which are occupied. With the exception of one building at the corner of Harvard Street now being rehabilitated, housing conditions on Lorne Street are especially poor.

E. Utilities

1. Sewers - Sanitary - Development of the Lena Park site can be adequately served by peripheral sewers. A main outfall ranging from 20" x 26" brick to 27" x 35" brick is presently available for connection.
2. Sewers - Storm Drainage - Only one storm drainage line serves the interior of the site at present. If the entire site is to be developed, a new storm drainage system will have to be constructed. Preliminary engineering reports indicate that the peripheral storm drainage system can assume any additional loads which may result from development of the site.
3. Water - The interior and peripheral water systems serving the area range from 6 inch to 12 inch and are





DORCHESTER  
LENA PARK

MAP 8  
EXISTING BUILDINGS

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REVISED:

0 100 200 300 FEET



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high service in design. Future development, therefore, can be adequately served by the existing network.

4. Street Lighting - Any development should be serviced by a new street lighting system.

5. Streets - Of the seven interior and peripheral streets, three are private and four are public.

Interior streets are either in need of repair or are unpaved. With the exception of Lorne Street which is served by utilities, new development need not necessarily conform to the existing interior street pattern.

F. Construction Problems

Underground utility construction and installation should present no real problem as the site shows no indication of ledge areas.

G. Zoning

The site presently has an H-1 zoning designation which allows apartments at a density just under 40 units per net residential acre. If the entire tract were so developed, the project would contain approximately 450 dwelling units.

H. Parcel Data

The site is made up of two large parcels and many smaller ones. One of the large parcels is owned by the





Combined Jewish Philanthropies and is occupied in part by the YMHA Hecht House. The Lena Park Housing Development Corporation is building a 14-story apartment tower on the other large parcel. The remaining land is occupied primarily by dilapidated residential buildings and is under many ownerships. Table 4 in the Appendix provides detailed information for each parcel in the tract.



#### IV. DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

##### A. Objectives for Development

The foregoing discussion of the Lena Park site and its nearby neighborhoods indicates that the area is changing rapidly both in terms of the people living there and in terms of environmental conditions. The Lena Park site offers the community an opportunity to lessen the adverse effects of change and at the same time improve the quality of life in the neighborhood.

The planned multi-purpose center can serve as a focus for community activities where new and long-time residents can recreate, receive needed health and social welfare services, and become acquainted with each other.

Although the 14-story tower now under construction by the Lena Park Housing Development Corporation will add 97 units to the area's housing stock, each unit has been designed to contain two bedrooms. This arrangement limits the structure's capacity to serve the needs of either the elderly (who require efficiency and one bedroom units) or families with children (who generally require more bedrooms and are best located in low rise buildings).



Of these groups, large low income families are presently creating the greatest demand for housing in the Lena Park area. The elderly, who continue to comprise a substantial portion of the total population, also appear to be creating a demand for housing, but to a lesser degree.

It is recommended, therefore, that the remainder of the site be developed for new housing as proposed already by the Lena Park Housing Development Corporation.

It is suggested that the new development be more responsive to the housing needs indicated above by providing a substantial number of large units for families with children and a number of smaller ones which may be occupied by elderly.

Finally, to the extent economically possible, it is suggested that residents of the new units be afforded the opportunity to share in the ownership of the housing. This objective might be achieved either through establishing a cooperative for the entire development or through making individual units available for sale as condominiums.

#### B. Suggested Plan

Current thinking of the Lena Park Housing Development Corporation endorsed by this report calls for



. redevelopment of the site in the following manner:

1. Construct a fourteen-story tower containing 97 two-bedroom units (already under construction).
2. Acquire the YMHA Hecht House via a HUD grant under the 703 Neighborhood Facilities Program and convert it for use as a multi-purpose neighborhood center (the application for this grant was approved by HUD recently).
3. Acquire remaining vacant land, most of which is presently owned by the Combined Jewish Philanthropies, for purposes of constructing approximately 120 units of low and middle income housing.
4. Acquire and demolish the existing structures on Lorne Street and relocate those families into the newly constructed units.
5. Construct an additional 100 units of low and middle income housing on cleared land on Lorne Street.

In all the plan calls for a total of 317 units, 97 of which are already under construction. The following Table 3 is suggested as a guide for establishing the appropriate mix of unit size for the development.





TABLE 3: SUGGESTED MIX OF UNITS BY HOUSING TYPE

Type	Acres	No. of Units	Net Density (units/acre)
<hr/>			
<u>High Rise</u> (already under construction)			
2 bedroom	1.5 acres	97	57
 <u>Low Rise</u>			
Efficiency		40	
1 bedroom		40	
2 bedrooms	8 acres	20	28
3 bedrooms		75	
4 & 5 bedrooms		45	
<hr/>			
Sub-total	9.5 acres	317	33
Multi-service Center	2	--	--
TOTAL	11.5 acres	317	33
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## APPENDIX

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TABLE 4: PROPERTY DATA

Address	Parcel Number	Square Footage	Assessed Value			Owner
			Land	Building	Total	
337 Harvard St.	4299	3396	800	11200	12000	Maxwell Freeman
2-4 Lorne St.	4298	3214	600	11400	12000	Maxwell Freeman
6 Lorne St.	4297	3214	600	5900	6500	Julio Teixeira
12 Lorne St.	4296	3214	600	5900	6500	L.J. & M.E. Cater
14 Lorne St.	4295	3214	600	5900	6500	Eric Harriott
18-20 Lorne St.	4294	3214	600	4400	5000	Genevieve Brown
22-24 Lorne St.	4293	3214	600	4400	5000	L.A.&L.A. Lawrence
						A. Boyajian Trustee
26-28 Lorne St.	4292	3214	600	5900	6500	Lena Park Realty Trust
30 Lorne St.	4291	3214	600	5900	6500	Joseph Fine
34 Lorne St.	4290	3214	600	5900	6500	J. R. Ramos
38-40 Lorne St.	4289	3214	600	5900	6500	Bernice Kreiger
42-44 Lorne St.	4288	3214	600	4400	5000	T,P, &S. Andelman
46-48 Lorne St.	4287	3214	600	0	600	Alfred Pozzi
50-52 Lorne St.	4286	4784	900	16100	17000	Betty M. Carlin
						A.W. Marshall Trust
56 Lorne St.	4285	3380	700	0	700	Alda Realty Trust
						Arsen Boyajian, Trust. A & K Realty Trust
57-59 Lorne St.	4283	3417	700	7800	8500	
						A. Boyajian, Trust. A & K Realty Trust
55 Lorne St.	4282	2627	500	6000	6500	
						A. Boyajian Trust. Lena Park Realty Trust
51 Lorne St.	4281	3212	600	5900	6500	

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